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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine if the level of ethnicity, as measured by an acculturation instrument, is related to levels of vocational identity. Three measures were used: (1) My Vocational Situation (J. L. Holland and others, 1980); (2) the Majority-Minority Relations Survey (MMRS), an alternate form of the American-International Relations Survey instrument developed by G. R. Sodowsky and B. S. Plake (1991); and (3) a biographical questionnaire developed by the researcher. Survey packages were mailed to 467 randomly selected college students who identified themselves as Hispanic. One hundred forty-nine (32%) Hispanic undergraduate students returned the survey. Results demonstrate that Hispanic individuals with high vocational identity are more culturally assimilated into the majority culture. In addition, vocational identity was inversely related to the factor scale of perceived prejudice on the MMRS. Overall, these Hispanic students had levels of vocational identity similar to those of the normative sample. (Contains four tables and eight references.) (Author/SLD)

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Acculturation and vocational identity: The influence of Hispanic familism

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine if the level of ethnicity, as measured by an acculturation instrument, is related to the level of Vocational Identity. Three measures were used for this study: My Vocational Situation (MVS; Holland et al, 1980), Majority-Minority Relations Survey (MMRS), an alternate form of Sodowsky and Plake's (1991) American-International Relations Survey which measures acculturation, and a biographical questionnaire developed by this researcher. Survey packets were mailed to 467 randomly selected students who identified themselves as being Hispanic through a major university. One hundred forty-nine Hispanic undergraduate students completed and returned the required instruments and demographic survey. This created a respondent rate of 32 percent. The results of this study demonstrated that vocational identity was inversely related with acculturation indicating that Hispanic individuals with high vocational identity are more culturally assimilated into the majority culture.

This study focused on the examination of two constructs; acculturation and vocational identity in a Hispanic (individuals of Spanish or Latin origin) population and the relationship to vocational development and familial influence. Ethnicity has been measured in terms of acculturation, which has been defined as the degree of assimilation to the majority culture and the degree of retention of the minority culture. The present study was an effort to determine if the level of ethnicity, as measured by an acculturation instrument, is related to a level of vocational identity and the possible effect of Hispanic culture on vocational identity and development.

Vocational development theory focuses on understanding the factors of occupational choice, vocational identity, the evolution of personal identity in regard to careers and work, and the transition, induction, and adjustment to the world of work. Most theories of vocational development view vocational behavior as a continuing process of growth and learning. Vocational development theory places emphasis on individual self-concepts, developmental experiences, personal history, and the psychosocial environment of the individual. In theory this would include the variable of ethnicity.

Current theoretical perspectives have been criticized as being inadequate for minorities as a result of being constructed wholly on the career development of white males. Few theorists have attempted to incorporate the vocational development of minorities into vocational theories. Currently no separate theoretical statements have been introduced regarding career development of minorities (Brown, 1991; Hansen, 1987; Hoyt, 1989; Slaney & Russell, 1987). This study demonstrated that vocational identity is affected by racial/ethnic variables. Based upon previous researcher's comments on the lack of empirical data available, and the need for inclusion, this study provides empirical evidence that ethnicity is a factor and should be incorporated into current vocational theories to allow for the influence of one's culture upon vocational decision making and vocational development.

Method

Participants

The sample was comprised of Hispanic undergraduate students currently enrolled at the state University. Survey packets were mailed to 467 randomly selected students who identified themselves as being Hispanic through the office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The

age range was from 18 to 31 years with a mean age of 20.8. The sample was comprised of 63.2% (91) females and 36.8% (53) males. The sample consisted of 47.1% (65) Freshman, 18.1% (25) Sophomore, 15.9% (22) Juniors, and 18.1% (25) senior. One student was identified as a 5th year student in the School of Education, which is technically a graduate program for the certification of teachers.

Procedure

All participants were assigned a number to protect their confidentiality. Individuals were instructed not to put their name or ID number on any of the surveys. A cover sheet was provided explaining the study, requesting their participation, and giving general instructions for completing the instruments. All students were requested to participate in the study on a volunteer basis. Those who agreed to participate signed a consent form and were instructed to complete the packet of surveys. Once the participants completed the surveys they placed them in a pre-addressed envelope and were given a copy of the consent form which contained a contact phone number if they had further inquiries.

A data sampling plan was followed to control for data errors and to collect a representative sample of individuals for the study. The first part of the plan consisted of random selection of subjects which was implemented to ensure representiveness of the population surveyed. Second, Cohen's table of n to detect r-by-t test (1969, pg. 116) was used for the estimation of adequate sample size that could be analyzed by ANCOVA to reduce standard error of the mean and increase in the precision of generalizable results. An approximate N of 112 was determined for $p > 0.50$ for B values of .10. An additional 30% increase of N was added to aid in the reduction of restriction of range within the sample size as a result of sampling only University of Kansas undergraduate students. This provided a total N of 145 necessary for the study. An N of 149 was returned giving a 32% return rate of mailed surveys.

Instruments

Three measures were used for this study: My Vocational Situation (MVS; Holland et al, 1980), Majority-Minority Relations Survey (MMRS), an alternate form of Sodowsky and Plake's (1991) American-International Relations Survey which measures acculturation, and a biographical questionnaire developed by this researcher. The first two measures were chosen for the study as a

result of an extensive literature review which indicated that these two measures provided the highest reliability for the constructs of vocational identity and acculturation.

The MVS contains three scales, Vocational Identity, Occupational Information, and Barriers. It is an instrument useful for assessing an individual's vocational identity, career development, and investigating career stability. Holland et al. (1980) reported split-half (Kuder-Richardson 20) reliability coefficients of .89 and .88 for male and female college students on the Vocational Identity scale. For the Occupational Information and Barriers scales the reliability for men were .79 and .45, and for women they were .77 and .65. Validity studies by Holland et al. (1980) and by Lucas et al. (1988) provided evidence supporting the construct validity of the MVS.

The Occupational Information Scale is designed to measure the individual's need for career information, employment opportunities, and what types of individuals enter into various occupations. The Barriers Scale measures the individual's perceived external obstacles to a chosen occupational goal.

For the purpose of this study only the Vocational Identity Scale was used as the other two scales lack high internal consistency as demonstrated by the figures discussed above. This lack of reliability indicates that the scales may not be a good measure of the constructs they represent. Because the information provided by these scales may be questionable, they were not used in the study.

The Majority-Minority Relations Survey contains 8 multiple-choice items and 26 Likert items for a total of 43 items. For both the Likert and multiple-choice items, 1 indicates strong affiliation with the majority group, suggesting assimilation or high acculturation; and 6 indicates strong affiliation with one's minority group, suggesting low acculturation. The middle score indicates an ability to assume both worlds, with denial of neither, suggesting integration or biculturalism. Items respond to various identified cultural elements such as; pride in one's ethnic group, acceptance of one's ethnic cultural values, preference for one's ethnic foods, and the use of one's ethnic language. The MMRS's preliminary studies indicate that it is a valid, generalizable and reliable instrument for assessing acculturation attitudes of Hispanics (Sodowsky et al, 1991). Internal consistency reliability of the subscales indicate that the three factors of perceived prejudice (.92) acculturation (.89) and language usage (.94) have evidence of high reliability

within a Hispanic population. Internal consistency reliability for the full scales was reported at .95 (Sodowsky et al, 1991).

The biographical questionnaire design was based on research conducted by Splete and Freeman-George (1985). These researchers identified seven familial influence factors related to individual career decision-making and career development. These factors were: geographic location, genetic inheritance, family background, socioeconomic status, family composition, parenting style, and parental work-related attitudes. The biographical questionnaire recorded demographic data relevant to these influential factors. Subjects responded to questions concerning parental and grandparental educational level, family dynamics, sibling educational level, geographic location, primary language, parental occupations, and family income.

Results

Many of the respondents, 38.1% (53), stated that they were the first and/or only child in the family to attend college. Among the respondents, 75.3% (107) identified themselves as Mexican Americans, 4.9% (7) South Americans, 5.6 % (8) Central Americans, 4.2% (6) Puerto Rican, 4.9% (7) Cubans, and 4.9% (7) as "Other Hispanics/Hispanic". The breakdown for the Mexican Americans closely matched the 1990 census data, which showed that 70% of Hispanics were Mexican Americans (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1991). A total of 31 respondents (25.6%) identified themselves as first-generation immigrants. The number of respondents for the second, third and fourth generations were 35, 45, and 10. A total of 28 individuals did not identify themselves in this category. A total of 79 (53.7%) identified themselves as first born, with 32 (21.8%) as second born 22 (15.0%) as third born, and 7 (4.8%) as fourth born. Sixty percent of the respondents have family members who are currently residents/citizens of other countries. The majority of respondents 82.6% (123) stated that they had Godparents.

Of respondents 75.5% (111) indicated that they spoke Spanish. Of these 111, 33.1% stated that they were fluent speakers and 23.4% indicated that Spanish was their first language.

Respondents were asked to rate the level of influence their parents, teachers, peers/friends and Hispanic community had on their decision to go to college. Respondents indicated that parents had greatly influenced (68%) their decision to go to college, but indicated that parents had little influence on choice of major (46%).

Descriptive Data: MMRS and MVS

The mean (M) Acculturation Score of the MMRS was 2.51 on a scale from one to six. The standard deviation (SD) was .723. The scale score of one represents an individual who is highly acculturated or who is almost completely assimilated within the majority culture. The scale score of six represents an individual who is minimally acculturated or one who remains entrenched within their minority culture. The range of scores for all individuals on the MMRS was 1.26 for the lowest score and 4.60 for the highest score. All scores fell within these two range scores.

The scoring indicated that on average, the respondents were moderately assimilated into the majority culture but continued to preserve aspects of their own culture and identity. This interpretation is derived from an average score of 2.51 on the MMRS which Sodowsky et al, 1991 defines as moderate assimilation. The means and standard deviation scores on the three subscales with the same scoring described above (Sodowsky et al, 1991). For the subscale of Perceived Prejudice M=2.41, SD=.88; indicating that the respondents felt accepted by the majority culture. For the subscale Acculturation M=3.09, SD=.797; indicating that the respondents were somewhat less accepting of the majority people and their culture. For the last subscale, Language Usage, M=1.68, SD=.727; indicating that respondents generally preferred to speak English and had lowered proficiency and usage of the Spanish language.

The mean vocational identity Score for all respondents was 11.67 on a scale of zero to eighteen. The standard deviation was 4.59. The score of zero on the MVS represents an individual with extreme low vocational identity. This indicates that the lower the score the less likely the individual possesses a clear and stable picture of goals, interests, personality and talents and the possibility of having difficulty making good vocational decisions (Holland et al, 1980). A score of eighteen indicates a person with a high vocational identity. This indicates the opposite of the low score with the individual possessing a clear and stable picture of their goals, interests, personality and talents and having little difficulty making good vocational decisions (Holland et al, 1980). The range of scores for the respondents was 0 to 18 with the majority of individuals receiving scores in the 10 to 12 range (M=11.67). This mean score indicated that the respondents had moderate to high levels of Vocational Identity suggesting a relatively clear sense of identity, and the possession of stable goals, and interests as defined by Holland et al, 1980. Comparisons to the norms of college students on the MVS (Holland et al, 1980), indicated that college students

on the vocational identity scale received a mean of 11.25 with a standard deviation of 4.14. These scores are closely matched with scores received by Hispanic individuals in this study.

Acculturation and Vocational Identity

A Pearson correlation addressed the relationship between acculturation and vocational identity. This was found to be statistically significant, $r = -.16$, $p < .05$, indicating that these two variables are inversely related. As indexed by r^2, the strength of the relationship was .03 indicating a weak effect. This result implies that when vocational identity is high, acculturation will also be high, and when acculturation score is low vocational identity will be low. As individuals with low acculturation are considered to be more closely tied to Hispanic culture, this result could suggest that, being tied to a minority culture, or some aspects of Hispanic culture, or some combination of the two influences, negatively affects the level of vocational identity.

Acculturation, Perceived prejudice and Language usage and Vocational Identity

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between the three factor scales of the MMRS (Perceived Prejudice, Acculturation and Language Usage) and the dependent variable, Vocational Identity. It predicted an inverse relationship between the three factor scales and Vocational Identity. Although all three factor scales had an inverse relationship to vocational identity only the factor scale of perceived prejudice reached statistical significance. This scale is a measure of the perceived degree of acceptance of Hispanics by the majority group. The results indicate that individuals who perceived higher degrees of nonacceptance by the majority group also had lower levels of vocational identity. Table 1 presents the correlation coefficients for the MMRS subscales and vocational identity.

Vocational Identity and the Demographic Variables

The third hypothesis examined whether differences in vocational identity could be attributed to the demographic variables after adjusting for differences in acculturation. A series of one way ANCOVA's tested this hypothesis. The Bonferroni adjustment procedure was used to control for Type I error which occurs due to multiple univariate analyses. A significant level of .001 was set for the ANCOVA analysis.

There was very little evidence supporting this hypothesis as only one (Father's educational level) out of thirty-six analyses was statistically significant. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 2.

Acculturation and the Relationship to the Demographic Variables

Significant correlations were noted for the variable of parental educational level indicating that the higher the parents' educational level the stronger their children's affiliations with the majority group. Correlations for the variable of income indicated that higher family incomes were associated with stronger affiliation with the majority culture.

Further correlations were noted for the variables of influence upon college decision making indicating that the greater the influence of teacher, parents and community on respondent's college decision making, the stronger the respondent's affiliation with the minority culture. Significant correlations between culture specific variables and the MMRS were; living in or near a Hispanic community, close association with the Hispanic community, belonging to a Hispanic support group, relatives living within the nuclear home, having non-U.S. relatives, and ability to speak Spanish, all indicating strong affiliations with the minority culture.

Of interest, male gender was correlated with the subscale of perceived prejudice which indicated that males had a higher degree of perceived prejudice than females. Another aspect of the perceived prejudice scale was that higher family incomes were associated with lower perceived prejudice.

Lastly, the variable of vocational counseling and receiving financial aid were correlated on the MMRS and the perceived prejudice factor scale. The correlations indicated that individuals who received vocational counseling and financial aid had stronger affiliations with the minority culture and perceived higher levels of prejudice. The results of all analyses are presented in Table 3.

Demographics with My Vocational Situation

The results indicated that few demographic variables were related to the constructs of vocational identity and the MVS. The variables that are related and provided additional information are: whether the respondent was influenced by a peer/friend to go to college, parental involvement on the choice of college major, and the respondent's age and educational level. All four of these variables were positively correlated with the MVS indicating that the older the individual and/or the higher the grade level, the higher the vocational identity. Also the higher the influence by a peer/friend to go to college the higher the vocational identity. Lastly, the higher the

involvement by the parents on the choice of college major, the higher the vocational identity. This data is presented in Table 4.

Discussion

The results of this study show that vocational identity does have an inverse relationship with acculturation among Hispanic students. This means that Hispanic individuals with higher levels of vocational identity are more culturally assimilated into the majority culture. This study also shows that vocational identity was inversely related to the factor scale of Perceived Prejudice on the MMRS, which indicated that Hispanic individuals with high vocational identity perceive a high degree of acceptance by the majority culture.

Data pertaining to the issue of differences in vocational identity and the demographic variables revealed that vocational identity was unrelated to the various demographic variables, after adjusting for individual differences in acculturation. This means that the respondents' background and family influences were not directly related to vocational identity. The analysis of the MMRS and the demographic variables indicated that the closer the individual's ties to the Hispanic family and community, the lower the individual's acculturation. The analysis of the MVS and the demographic variables indicated that for each of the four variables; the higher the education level, the older the individual, the greater the parental involvement in college major and the greater the influence of peers/friends, the higher the vocational identity.

To date, research in the area of acculturation has not expanded into vocational development. Various researchers have hypothesized that racial and ethnic differences could influence the process of vocational development (Bratcher, 1982, Lopez, 1989; Otto & Call, 1985; Zingaro, 1983). This study added to acculturation and vocational development research and documented that Hispanic individuals who retained their Hispanic culture were less assimilated into the majority culture and had lower levels of vocational identity.

The results of this research indicated that overall, Hispanic individuals have similar levels of vocational identity with the norms presented in the MVS manual for college students (Holland et al, 1980). However, the level of acculturation for the Hispanic individual does effect vocational identity.

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Table 1

Correlation of Vocational Identity Scores with the Three Factor Scales of the MMRS

Subscale	Vocational Identity
Perceived Prejudice	-.1643*
Acculturation	-.0927
Language Usage	-.1471

* $p < .05$

Table 2

Summary of Demographic Variables and Vocational Identity after Controlling for Acculturation

Source of Variance	Adjusted SS	df	MS	F
Covariate				
MMRS	81.754	1	81.754	3.926
Education				
Father	473.872	7	67.696	3.692*
Mother	150.638	7	21.520	1.042
Paternal GMother	252.915	7	36.131	1.814
Paternal Gfather	98.576	5	19.715	.951
Maternal Gmother	85.798	7	12.257	.581
Maternal GFather	110.176	6	18.363	.883
Influence				
Teacher	323.322	4	51.905	2.620
Friend	323.322	4	80.830	4.253
Community	68.023	5	13.605	.650
Parent	60.081	4	15.020	.721
Influence on Major	162.525	5	32.505	1.603
Hispanic Comm	108.601	2	54.301	2.685
Assoc w/ Comm	124.010	2	62.005	3.082
Hispanic Support	6.207	1	6.207	.299
Personal				
Sex	21.362	2	10.681	.513
Age	352.791	14	25.199	1.247
Education level	121.864	5	24.373	1.186
Occupation Choice	141.835	6	23.639	1.150
Type of Hispanic	42.906	6	7.151	.336

Table 2 continued:

Source of Variance	Adjusted SS	df	MS	F
Generation	13.977	3	4.659	.222
# of Children in Fam	267.351	13	20.565	.994
Birth Order	39.844	7	5.692	.266
Speak Spanish	49.098	2	24.549	1.190
Speak fluently	89.052	2	44.526	2.187
Spanish First Lang	40.965	2	20.483	.990
High School Prepared	175.089	4	43.772	2.184
Vocational Counseling	1.761	2	.880	.042
Receives Financial aid	7.495	1	7.495	.361
Family Contributes	68.999	2	34.49	1.683
Family				
Father Occupation	142.596	6	23.766	1.156
Mother Occupation	56.777	5	11.355	.540
Income	80.620	4	20.155	.974
City of Origin	179.091	8	22.386	1.087
Godparents	.958	1	.958	.046
Relatives within home	39.659	2	19.830	.386
Relatives outside USA	13.52	2	6.761	.324

* $p < .001$

Table 3

Summary of Pearson Correlations for Demographic Variables and the Majority-Minority Relations Survey

Variable	MRS Prejudice	Perceived uration	Accult-Usage	Lang
Education				
Father	-.2289**	-.2374**	-.1927*	-.0506
Mother	-.2486**	-.2338**	-.2299**	-.1076
Paternal GMother	-.1072	-.1144	-.1371	.0818
Paternal GFather	-.1583	-.1669	-.1542	.0157
Maternal GMother	-.1693	-.1610	-.1763	-.0341
Maternal GFather	-.1224	-.0980	-.1243	-.1085
Influence				
Teacher	-.1419	-.0717	-.1967**	-.1707*
Friend	.1105	.1363	.0705	-.0132
Community	-.4209***	-.3449***	-.4206***	.3262***
Parent	-.1419	-.0717	-.1967**	-.1707*
Hispanic Comm	-.2184**	-.2085**	-.1993**	-.0939
Assoc w/ Comm	-.3952***	-.2842***	-.5422***	-.1599
Hispanic Support	-.3481***	-.2885***	-.3536***	-.2422**
Personal				
Sex	-.1587	-.1991*	-.1174	.0678
Age	-.0506	.0043	-.1288	-.0566
Education level	-.0956	-.0501	-.1430	-.0887
Occup Choice	.0204	-.0540	.0974	.1448
Type of Hispanic	-.0262	-.0830	-.0120	.2034
Generation	-.2777**	-.1892*	-.2980***	-.3331***
# of Child Fam	.0768	.0632	.1094	-.0154

Table 3 continued:

Variable	MRS Prejudice	Perceived uration	Accult- Usage	Lang
Birth Order	.0300	.0253	.0504	-.0244
Speak Spanish	-.3634***	-.2836***	-.3065***	-.4605***
Speak fluently	-.4224***	-.2678**	-.3748***	-.7785***
Span First Lang	-.3533***	-.2438**	-.2427**	-.7097***
High School Prep	.1477	.1862	.1078	-.0636
Voc Counseling	-.2769***	-.2564**	-.2171**	-.2279**
Receives aid	-.2772***	-.2625***	-.2748***	-.0744
Family Contrib	.0899	.1113	.0160	.0792
Family				
Father Occ	-.1582	-.1599	-.1353	-.0368
Mother Occ	-.0733	-.0323	-.0600	-.1951
Income	-.1898*	-.2200**	-.1014	-.0893
City of Origin	.1414	.1381	.1055	.0968
Godparents	-.0496	.0091	-.1248	-.0757
Relatives/home	-.2808***	-.2455**	-.2070	-.3114***
Relatives/ USA	-.2565**	-.2178**	-.1975*	-.2839***

* p< 05 **p< 01 ***p< 001

Table 4

Summary of Pearson Correlations for Demographic Variables and the MVS

Variable	Vocational Identity	Occupational Information	Barriers
Education			
Father	.0121	-.0829	.0187
Mother	.1102	.0057	-.0530
Paternal GMother	-.0615	.0305	.0197
Paternal GFather	-.1071	-.0109	-.1057
Maternal GMother	-.0649	-.0617	-.1151
Maternal GFather	-.1094	-.1163	-.1364
Influence			
Teacher	.2441	.2541	.2444
Friend	.2760***	.2902***	.1402
Community	.1594*	.1700	.1290
Parent	.1312	.1117	.1216
Influence on Major	.1818*	.1493	.0716
Hispanic Comm	-.0965	-.0453	-.0311
Assoc w/ Comm	-.0402	.0022	-.0633
Hispanic Support	.0981	-.0431	.1099
Personal			
Sex	.1021	-.0532	-.0573
Age	.1738*	.1076	.0882
Education level	.1868*	.0552	.0498
Occupation Choice	.0032	.0040	.1137
Type of Hispanic	.0095	.0386	.1205
Generation	0135	.0336	.0110
# of Children Fam	.1463	.1396	.0290

Table 4 continued:

Variable	Vocational Identity	Occupational Information	Barriers
Birth Order	.0155	-.0005	.0736
Speak Spanish	.1439	-.0882	.0775
Speak fluently	.1297	.2199	.1079
Spanish First Lang	.1213	.0996	.1047
High School Prep	.0119	.0166	-.0254
Voc Counseling	.0597	.0606	.2241**
Receives aid	.0919	.0001	.0738
Family Contrib	.1334	.1273	.0089
Family			
Father Occupation	.0157	-.0860	.0337
Mother Occupation	-.0482	-.0138	-.0884
Income	.1612	.1851	.1937
City of Origin	.0073	.1435	-.0230
Godparents	-.0095	-.0613	-.1479
Relatives in home	.1531	.0756	.0221
Relatives not USA	.0947	.0061	.1007

* p< .05 **p< .01 ***p< .001